

students: Indian Country. This bill includes a new initiative to provide grants and related assistance to Indian Tribal Colleges and Universities to improve and expand their capacity to serve Indian students. The bill authorizes \$10 million for FY 1999 and such sums as may be necessary in the years beyond FY 1999. This new initiative for Tribal Colleges will provide much-needed funding to strengthen academic programs, develop faculty, and improve student services.

Finally, I support the extension of the Special Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership Program (LEAP), formerly known as the State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) program. SSIG provides funding on a dollar-for-dollar match to help states provide need-based financial aid to students through grants and community service work study awards. Without this federal incentive, many states would not have established state financial aid programs. As a cosponsor of the LEAP Act, I am pleased that states will now gain new flexibility to use these funds for activities such as increasing grant amounts, carrying out academic or merit scholarships programs, community service programs, and early interventions programs. This program is yet another example of a federal-state partnership developed to create maximum opportunities for students seeking higher education.

While I am pleased with the inclusion of numerous programs that will benefit students pursuing higher education, I am deeply disappointed the conference report failed to include an important amendment to count higher education as a work requirement for purposes of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. I was a proud cosponsor of this amendment which enjoyed a bipartisan majority in the Senate-passed bill.

Throughout this Congress, the leadership has echoed the importance of taking personal responsibility and achieving independence. As a supporter of welfare reform, I support imposing work requirements on individuals who receive cash assistance. However, to not allow students to earn a degree, a certifiable ticket to self-sufficiency, is irresponsible and thoughtless.

I have heard from a number of my constituents that the current system has had the unfortunate effect of forcing TANF recipients out of college or vocational school and into dead-end, entry-level jobs. It seems obvious that enabling these individuals, which are usually single mothers, to complete a degree would be far more effective in achieving long-term benefits. Education leads to higher income levels, helping move these families out of poverty for good and making them productive taxpayers. Federal requirements should not be so rigid and inflexible that states are prevented from exercising this option. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in addressing this need in the Higher Education Act of 1998, how-

ever, I am committed to working with Senator WELLSTONE and other advocates to revisit this issue in the future.

Passage of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998 was absolutely essential for the continuation and improvement of a system that helps keep post-secondary education within the reach of typical American families. I was pleased with the expeditious manner by which Congress responded to the conference report and President Clinton's prompt signing of the bill.●

ENSURING SAFE SCHOOLS

● Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am delighted that the Senate has approved legislation which I cosponsored to help ensure the safety of our nation's schools. Senators CAMPBELL, JEFFORDS, and FAIRCLOTH introduced S.2235, "The School Resource Officers Partnership Grant Act of 1998," in June. It was approved unanimously by the Judiciary Committee and approved by the Senate yesterday.

The goal of this legislation is to help put a stop to crime and violence in our nation's schools. Through this legislation, partnerships will be developed between state and local law enforcement agencies and the school districts in which they serve. While national statistics on violence in schools indicate an overall downward trend, the types of violence that have occurred recently, particularly in the last school year, are nothing short of traumatic.

The sight and sound of schoolyard shootings have become all too familiar. Americans were shocked, time and time again, by the devastating sight on the evening news of youngsters being carried to ambulances from school grounds following shooting sprees by other youngsters. Looking back at the 1997-1998 school year, several particularly alarming incidents occurred:

In October, a 16-year-old at Pearl High School in Mississippi went to school with a hunting rifle. He shot and killed a student and a teacher, leaving a second teacher with a bullet wound in the head.

In December, a student at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky used a pistol to kill 3 other students. The shooter was 14-years-old.

In March, 2 boys in Jonesboro, Arkansas, an eleven year-old and a thirteen year-old, pulled the fire alarm in their school. As students and teachers left the building, the two boys began shooting. They killed five people: four young girls and a teacher.

In April, a 14-year-old boy in Edinboro, Pennsylvania went to a school dance with a gun he apparently removed from his father's bureau drawer. He killed a science teacher and injured two students and another teacher.

At Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon a 15-year-old who was suspended for carrying a gun to school, returned to school the next day and

opened fire in a crowded cafeteria. He killed two students and wounded 19 others. Police suspect he shot and killed his parents, as well.

It is no secret that I support tougher restrictions on gun ownership. Earlier this year, Senator DURBIN and I offered an amendment to the spending bill for the Departments of Commerce, State and Justice. Our amendment would have held adult gun owners responsible if their weapon—which had not been stored properly—was used by a child to injure himself or someone else. I felt that this was the least we could do to help protect children from needless gun violence. Unfortunately, the majority of my Senate colleagues didn't agree, and our amendment was defeated.

Despite that setback, I believe that it is Congress' responsibility to take steps to assist local communities in their battle against school violence. Children bringing weapons to school and drug use among youngsters aren't problems of big city schools alone. In my own State of Rhode Island during the last school year, there were more than 400 weapons-related suspensions. To put that number in the proper perspective, we have fewer than 450 elementary and secondary schools in Rhode Island, including private and religious schools. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that the kind of atrocities that all of America witnessed in schools last year can't happen in our children's schools.

It is my sincere belief that The School Resource Officers Partnership Grant Act is a step in the right direction. This legislation will make federal funds available to local law enforcement agencies, working in partnership with local school districts, for "school resource officers." These SROs, who must be professional law enforcement officers, would address gang-related crime and violence, including drug use, in and around schools. They would work with students, teachers, and administrators on crime prevention and personal safety. And perhaps most importantly, they would work directly with students on conflict resolution to help avert violent outbursts that can leave innocent children dead or injured.

There are communities throughout our nation whose police officers have undertaken these very tasks. In Rhode Island, police officers in Newport, Providence, and West Warwick, to name a few, already are working within schools on crime prevention, mentoring, and conflict resolution. Our bill would allow local law enforcement agencies to use a portion of their federal Community Policing funds for these officers.

I applaud our teachers and administrators for their efforts to confront and address violence in schools, but we cannot expect them to undertake this battle alone. This bill will make the knowledge and resources of professional law enforcement agencies available to our schools. I know it will help keep our children safe.●